Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:

2021 AP® Art and Design Free-Response Questions

The following comments on the 2021 free-response questions for AP® Art and Design were written by the Chief Reader, Dale Clifford, from the Savannah College of Art and Design. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Please note: Each section of the AP Art and Design Portfolio Exams is considered a free-response question. Students respond to requirements of the Sustained Investigation section and Selected Works section. Artwork and written statements submitted for the Portfolio Exams are student responses.

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2-D Art and Design

2-D Art and Design

- Number of Students Scored: 34,509
- Number of Readers: 441
- Score Distribution:

Exam Score	N	%At
5	3,507	10.2
4	11,976	34.7
3	14,584	42.3
2	4,305	12.5
1	137	0.4

- Global Mean: 3.42

Section #1 **Task:** Selected Works

Max. Points: 10 **Mean Score:** 6.05

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to present five (5) digital images of works of art and design that demonstrate their understanding and engagement with 2-D art and design, as well as written statements that describe the ideas used to make the work.
- The group of works should demonstrate skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas, as well as technical competence through application of 2-D art and design elements and principles.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- In general, 2-D Art and Design Selected Works sections most effectively demonstrated competence in technical skills, such as the use of design elements and principles to create compositions.
- The commentary provided an insight to the ideas that the students were pursuing.

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What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Connections between materials, processes, and ideas were unclear.	• Successful works demonstrated synthesis when the selection of materials and processes was clear. For example, instead of focusing on developing technical skills with the use of a material, successful works addressed why the material was selected, as it related to the idea.
• Process images were included in the Selected Works section.	• Skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas, is more easily seen in finished works.
• Statements referenced images from the Sustained Investigation section.	• Each section of the portfolio is scored independently from the other. Successful responses included images that clearly demonstrated competence for the criteria in Selected Works.
• Regardless of the materials or ideas, the work should focus on the use of 2-D art and design elements and principles to create compositions.	• Successful responses demonstrated an engagement with 2-D art and design issues, including the application of design principles to guide the manipulation of design elements.

Section #2 **Task:** Sustained Investigation

Max. Points: 24 **Mean Score:** 15.52

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to present fifteen (15) digital images (some of which should document process and may include details) of works of art and design that demonstrate a sustained investigation of an idea in 2-D Art and Design, as well as written statements that identify the inquiry that guided the sustained investigation and descriptions of the practice, experimentation, and revision that was guided by the questions.
- The group of works and written commentary should demonstrate a sustained investigation through practice, experimentation, and revision; that synthesizes materials, processes, and ideas; as well as skillful application of 2-D art and design elements and principles.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- In general, 2-D Art and Design Sustained Investigation sections most effectively demonstrated competence in technical skills, such as the use of design elements and principles to create compositions.
- Students embraced the freedom to pursue meaningful ideas, and when the content was in response to personal concerns or events in the world, the perspectives were refreshing and insightful.

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What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Statements of inquiry were merely questions or descriptions of themes.	• Successful statements of inquiry include an overarching idea that ignites creation. It addresses what a student is interested in learning or discovering by creating works of art and design. As the student responds to the initial statement, they should be prepared for the inquiry to evolve. Good questions will lead to additional questions. Instead of focusing on a technique or a material, the statement of inquiry addresses how the idea was explored.
• Works in many portfolios demonstrated relationships between materials, process, or ideas, but few achieved synthesis.	• Successful responses included written evidence clarifying the intent of the choice of materials and processes to support the idea. Clarified statements, in addition to images, demonstrate how the student is integrating materials, processes, and ideas
• Statements on process were limited to describing the physical techniques used.	• Successful responses included the physical techniques as well as the thought processes employed to develop ideas.
• Progress images were submitted as process images.	• Progress images merely show the stages of creating works of art and design. Successful process images included research, developmental sketches, and media experimentations that provided evidence of thinking and the evolution of ideas.

Based on your understanding of student responses evaluated at this year's AP® Reading, what advice do you offer to teachers to help them improve student performance for this section of the exam?

- Regular and early emphasis on writing about the work as a part of the classroom experience.
- Develop prompts that encourage students to write about why they made decisions and how those decisions address materials, processes and ideas.
- When developing the statement of inquiry, students should narrow overly broad ideas, such as emotions or mental health, so that it specifies the individual student's interest.

Which resources do you recommend to teachers to help them better prepare students for demonstrating content knowledge and skill(s) required for this section?

- Teachers should make use of the 2020 and 2021 student samples posted to AP Central, the 2020 and 2021 AP Art and Design Digital Exhibit, AP Daily videos posted to AP Classroom, receive email notifications and actively participate in the College Board Online Teacher Community, and review AP Art and Design webinars posted to the AP Art and Design landing page on AP Central.

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3-D Art and Design

3-D Art and Design

- Number of Students Scored: 4,573
- Number of Readers: 441
- Score Distribution:

Exam Score	N	%At
5	298	6.5
4	1,308	28.6
3	1,660	36.3
2	1,140	24.9
1	167	3.7

- Global Mean: 3.09

Section #1 **Task:** Selected Works

Max. Points: 10 **Mean Score:** 5.90

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to present ten (10) digital images (two views of three works they created) that demonstrate their understanding and engagement with 3-D art and design, as well as written statements that describe the ideas used to make the work.
- The group of works should demonstrate skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas, as well as technical competence through application of 3-D art and design elements and principles.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- In general, 3-D Art and Design Selected Works sections demonstrated good competence in using design elements and principles to activate space.
- Technical skills with media and the relationship to ideas were moderate to good.
- Overall, the commentary provided an insight to the ideas that the students were pursuing.

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What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Connections between materials, processes, and ideas were unclear.	• Successful works demonstrated synthesis when the selection of materials and processes was clear. For example, instead of focusing on developing technical skills with the use of a material, successful works addressed why the material was selected, as it related to the idea.
• Process images were included in the Selected Works section.	• Skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas, is more easily seen in finished works.
• Statements referenced images from the Sustained Investigation section.	• Each section of the portfolio is scored independently from the other. Successful responses included images that clearly demonstrated competence for the criteria in Selected Works.
• Regardless of the media or ideas, the work should focus on 3-D art and design issues.	• Successful responses demonstrated an engagement with 3-D art and design issues, including the use of occupied and unoccupied space and how the form exists in a place and/or a contextual environment.

Section #2 **Task:** Sustained Investigation

Max. Points: 24 **Mean Score:** 15.68

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to present fifteen (15) digital images (some of which should document process and may include different views and/or details) of works of art and design that demonstrate a sustained investigation of an idea in 3-D Art and Design, as well as written statements that identify the question(s) that guided the sustained investigation and descriptions of the practice, experimentation, and revision that was guided by the questions.
- The group of works and written commentary should demonstrate a sustained investigation through practice, experimentation, and revision; that synthesizes materials, processes, and ideas; as well as skillful application of 3-D art and design elements and principles.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- In general, student responses demonstrated moderate to good competence in the investigation of ideas through 3-D art and design.
- Students embraced the freedom to pursue meaningful ideas, and when the content was in response to personal concerns or events in the world, the perspectives were refreshing and insightful.

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What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Statements of inquiry were merely questions or descriptions of themes.	• Successful statements of inquiry include an overarching idea that ignites creation. It addresses what a student is interested in learning or discovering by creating works of art and design. As the student responds to the initial statement, they should be prepared for the inquiry to evolve. Good questions will lead to additional questions. Instead of focusing on a technique or a material, the statement of inquiry addresses how the idea was explored.
• Works in many portfolios demonstrated relationships between materials, process, or ideas, but few achieved synthesis	• Successful responses included written evidence clarifying the intent of the choice of materials and processes to support the idea. Clarified statements, in addition to images, demonstrate how the student is integrating materials, processes, and ideas.
• Statements on process were limited to describing the physical techniques used.	• Successful responses included the physical techniques as well as the thought processes employed to develop ideas.
• Progress images were submitted as process images.	• Progress images merely show the stages of creating works of art and design. Successful process images included research, developmental sketches, and media experimentations that provided evidence of thinking and the evolution of ideas.

Based on your understanding of student responses evaluated at this year's AP® Reading, what advice do you offer to teachers to help them improve student performance for this section of the exam?

- Regular and early emphasis on writing about the work as a part of the classroom experience.
- Develop prompts that encourage students to write about why they made decisions and how those decisions address materials, processes and ideas.
- When developing the statement of inquiry, students should narrow overly broad ideas, such as emotions or mental health, so that it specifies the individual student's interest.

Which resources do you recommend to teachers to help them better prepare students for demonstrating content knowledge and skill(s) required for this section?

- Teachers should make use of the 2020 and 2021 student samples posted to AP Central, the 2020 and 2021 AP Art and Design Digital Exhibit, AP Daily videos posted to AP Classroom, receive email notifications and actively participate in the College Board Online Teacher Community, and review AP Art and Design webinars posted to the AP Art and Design landing page on AP Central.

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Drawing

Drawing

- Number of Students Scored: 18,096
- Number of Readers: 441
- Score Distribution:

Exam Score	N	%At
5	2,562	14.2
4	6,814	37.7
3	6,214	34.3
2	2,246	12.4
1	260	1.4

- Global Mean: 3.51

Section #1 **Task:** Selected Works

Max. Points: 10 **Mean Score:** 6.49

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to present five (5) digital images of works of art and design that demonstrate their understanding and engagement with drawing issues, as well as written statements that describe the ideas used to make the work.
- The group of works should demonstrate skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas, as well as technical competence through application of drawing skills.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- In general, Drawing Selected Works sections effectively demonstrated competence with technical skills, such as the use of traditional drawing tools and processes.
- Technical skills with media and the relationship to ideas was good.
- Overall, the commentary provided an insight into the ideas that the students were pursuing.

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Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
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• Process images were included in the Selected Works section.	• Skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas, is more easily seen in finished works.
• Statements referenced images from the Sustained Investigation section.	• Each section of the portfolio is scored independently from the other. Successful responses included images that clearly demonstrated competence for the criteria in Selected Works.
• Regardless of the media or ideas, the work should focus on Drawing issues.	• Successful responses demonstrated an engagement with Drawing issues, such as line quality, rendering of form, the illusion of depth, mark making, and surface manipulation.

Section #2 **Task:** Sustained Investigation

Max. Points: 24 **Mean Score:** 16.16

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to present 15 (fifteen) digital images (some of which should document process and may include details) of works of art and design that demonstrate a sustained investigation of an idea through drawing, as well as written statements that identify the question(s) that guided the sustained investigation and descriptions of the practice, experimentation, and revision that was guided by the questions.
- The group of works and written commentary should demonstrate a sustained investigation through practice, experimentation, and revision; that synthesizes materials, processes, and ideas; as well as technical skill through drawing.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- In general, student responses demonstrated moderate to good competence in the investigation of an idea through drawing.
- Students embraced the freedom to pursue meaningful ideas, and when the content was in response to personal concerns or events in the world, the perspectives were refreshing and insightful.

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